

Culturally & Linguistically Sustaining Practices in Lowell Public Schools



Agenda

1. Overview of Planning Team
2. Review of Demographic Data
3. Review of Key Student Data
4. Vision of the Lowell Public Schools Portrait of a Graduate
5. Defining of Culture, Language and Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices (CLSP)
6. Overview of the Proposed CLSP Plan

CLSP Framework Planning Team

Name	Affiliation/Stakeholder Group	Race/Ethnicity
Latifah Phillips	District Leadership	Black/Indigenous Female
Joel Boyd	District Leadership	White Male
Daroth Yann	Central Office - HR	Asian Female
Melissa Newell	Central Office - Teaching & Learning	White Female
Matt Stahl	School leadership - Principal	White Male
Magaly Ronan	School Leadership - Asst Principal	
Jaime Moody	School Leadership - Asst Principal	Black Female
Karen Walton	Union Rep - Classroom Leadership	White/Greek American Female
Ralph Saint-Louis	Classroom Leadership - Teacher	Black/Haitian American Male
Hilary Clark	School Committee Representative	White Female

Lowell Public Schools Demographics

District Type

Public

Number of Schools

27

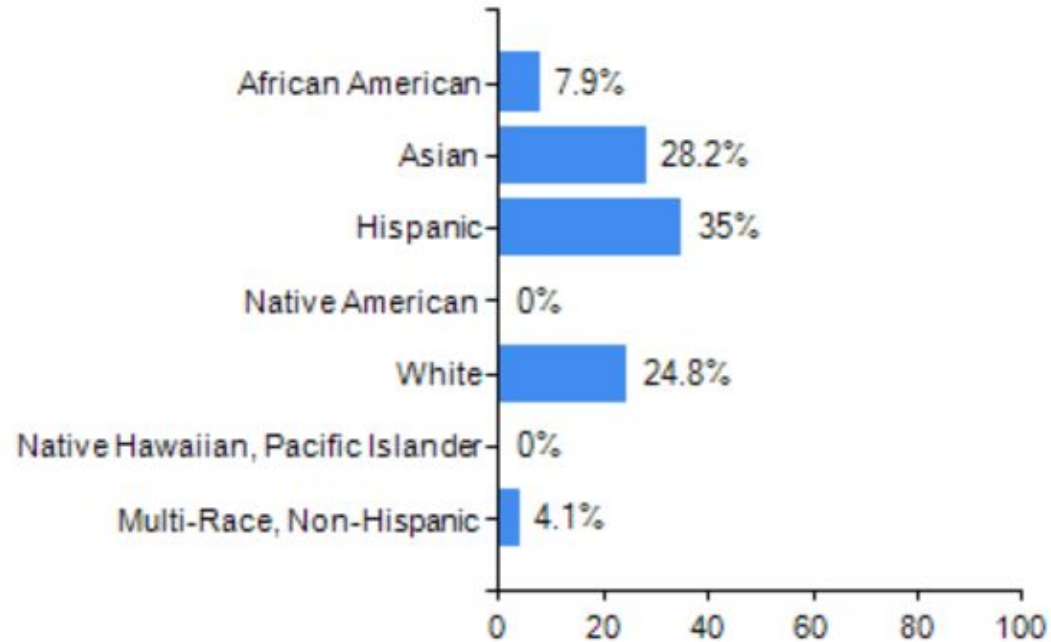
Enrollment

14,023

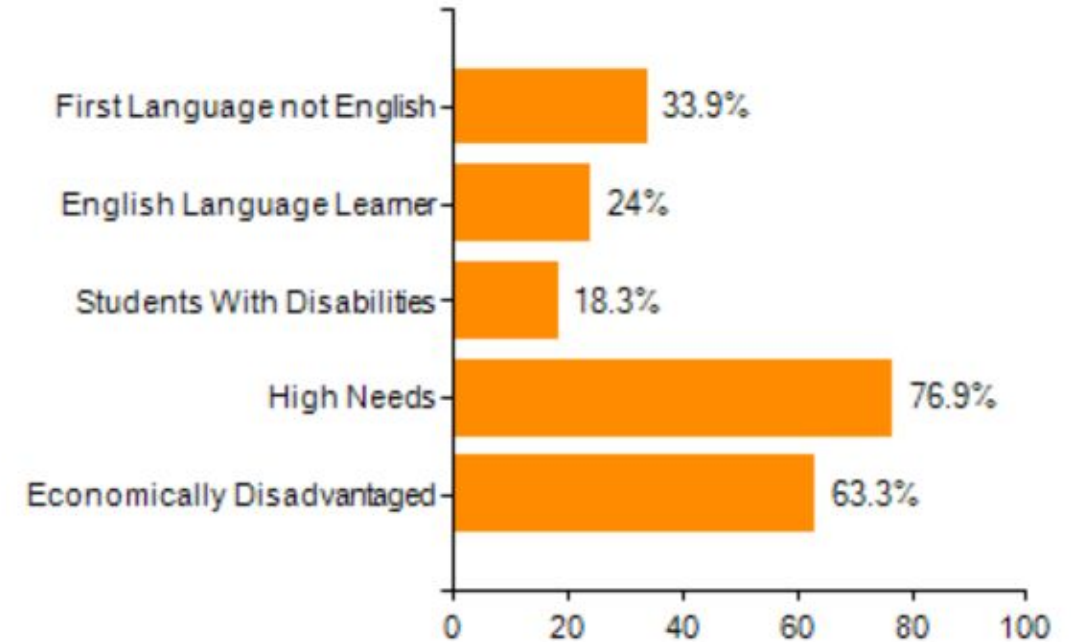
Grades Served

PK - 12

Student Race and Ethnicity



Selected Populations



Lowell Public Schools Staff Demographics

Black - Native American	1
Asian	103
Pacific Islander	1
Black	56
Native American	4
Latino	6
Latino-Asian, White	1
Latino-Black	5
Latino-Black, White	2
Latino-Pacific Island, White	1
Latino-White	143
White	2054
Unknown	258

**Out of 2635
employees
district-wide**

Lowell Public Schools Select Data from FY20

	DISTRICT ENROLLMENT	GRADUATION RATE	DROP OUT RATE	MASS CORE COMPLETION	IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION	OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION	ATTENDANCE	CHRONICALLY ABSENT	STUDENT RETENTION	PASSING ALL GRADE 9 COURSES	ATTENDING HIGHER ED POST GRADUATION
ASIAN	28.2	90	1.6	42.1	0.7	1.3	95.5	11.3	0.8	82.5	71.7
BLACK	7.9	82.9	3.8	26.3	1.7	3.2	95.2	10.2	1.9	72.2	83
HISPANIC	35	74.4	5.1	26.8	2.5	4.8	92.5	24.1	2.4	50.5	55.8
WHITE	24.8	78.6	3.2	37.7	1.4	3.4	93.8	20.2	1.2	63.9	73.9
MULTIRACIAL	4.1	70.8	2	38.9	2.4	5	94	16.5	1.4	58.1	72.2
ALL		80.9	3.3	35.4	1.7	3.3	94	17.4	1.5	64.6	71.4

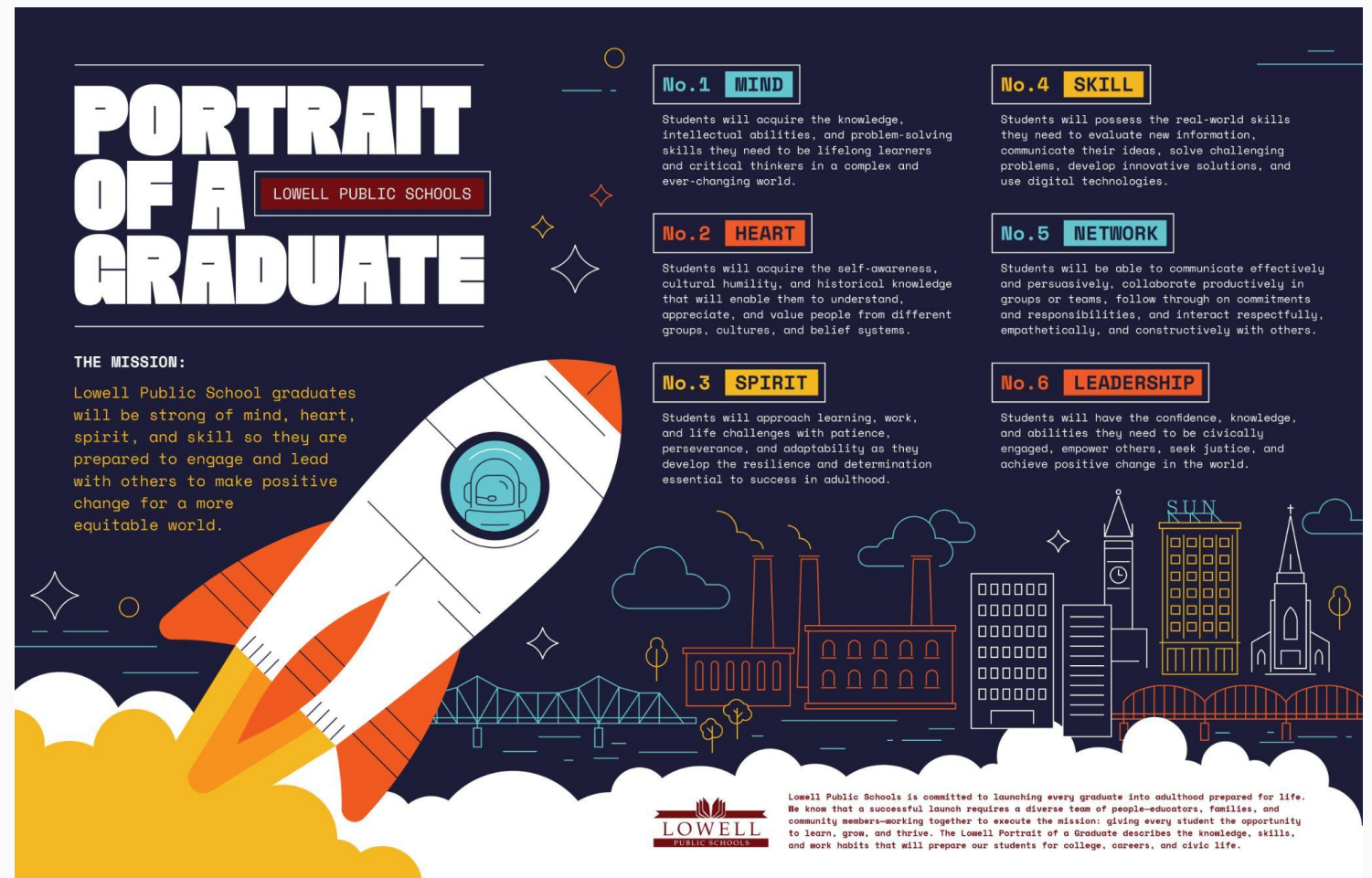
EL	24	65.5	6	13.6	1.3	2.7	92.9	16.6	1.6	53.3	58.4
SPED	18.3	56.5	4.7	20.8	2.9	6.9	92	25.6	2	50.4	46.6
ECON DIS	63.3	76.4	3.9	31.8	2	4.1	94.4	22.2	1.9	56.6	63.3

* No self-identified Native American students reported in ASPEN FY 20 data

**MCAS tests were not taken in FY 20 due to the pandemic

VISION

We believe teachers have a responsibility to all their students to ensure that all have an equitable opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability. Our practices structures and approaches need to authentically reflect our policies and our values. The Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices (CLSP) Framework marks our journey forward and begins the evolution toward leveraging difference as an asset.



The school community is representative of many cultures, and therefore culture has consequences on how students experience schools. A CLSP framework is intentional about the relationship between culture and education, presenting a multi-tiered systems approach for cultural inclusion that broadens what ethnic groups, classes, sexualities, and abilities are privileged in the creation and maintenance of traditional education.

[**Click Here for POG Review**](#)

The Cultural Iceberg

Surface Culture

Food
Flags Festivals
Fashion Holidays Music
Performances Dances Games
Arts & Crafts Literature Language

Deep Culture

Communication Styles and Rules

facial expressions gestures eye contact
personal space touching
body language tone of voice
handling and displaying of emotion
conversational patterns in different social situations

Notions of:

courtesy and manners
friendship leadership
cleanliness modesty beauty
roles related to age, sex, class, family, etc.

Concepts of:

self time past and future
fairness and justice

Attitudes toward:

elders adolescents dependents
rule expectations work authority
cooperation vs. competition
relationships with animals age sin death

Approaches to:

religion courtship marriage raising children
decision-making problem-solving

Culture & Language

- Culture is multiple components of one's identity, including but not limited to: race, economic background, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, and ability.
- Research suggests that many students whose cultures are more closely aligned with the "cultural fabric" of schools experience praise and are viewed as more dedicated than those whose home cultures differ.
- Educators committed to understanding both the concept of culture and many different cultures can refocus their lens for viewing students' cultures not as "deficiencies to overcome" (Paris & Alim, 2014) but as assets who possess vibrant realities and rich reservoirs of knowledge.

The Value of Language

Most teacher education programs focus on preparing teachers to learn about understanding and accommodating cultural and ethnic differences, rather than on learning about language and linguistic differences as well as pedagogical tools to address disparities (Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Tellez & Waxman, 2006; Levine, Howard & Moss, 2014).

As a result of prioritizing English language above others, children of immigrants not only lose the ability to communicate with family members, but they also undergo a period of not being fluent in either language (Portes 1998; Wong-Fillmore 1991; McLaughlin, Blanchard & Osanai 1995). Their communities, their academic learning, and their cultural identity suffer because of their language loss. The opposite of CLSP; which embraces all students and recognizes their differences as strengths.

LPS Defining

Culturally and Linguistic Sustaining Practices (CLSP)

- Teaching practices that use the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective in promoting academic achievements; it teaches to and through the strengths of students. It is culturally validating and affirming (Gay, 2010).
- Culturally responsive teaching “accommodates the dynamic mix of race, ethnicity, class, gender, region, religion, and family that contributes to every students’ cultural identity” (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1994).
- Effective teaching and learning occur in a culturally supported, learner-centered context, whereby the strengths students bring to school are identified, nurtured, and utilized to promote student achievement (Taylor, 2010).

Supporting Components of CLSP

Social Emotional Learning (SEL): Systemic implementation of SEL both fosters and depends upon an equitable learning environment, where all students and adults feel respected, valued and affirmed in their individual interests, talents, social identities, cultural values, and backgrounds.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): UDL is a framework for designing learning experiences so students have options for how they learn, what materials they use, and how they demonstrate their learning. When implemented with a lens of equity, the framework has the potential to eliminate opportunity gaps that exclude many learners, especially those who have been historically marginalized. UDL creates a learning environment that is the least restrictive and most culturally responsive, trauma-informed environment for all students.

Critical Consciousness and Social Justice: The process by which people who have historically been oppressed reflect on systems of injustice, feel efficacious, and act to change those systems. Please note: this is an ongoing, cyclical process rather than a linear state of being (Freire, 2006 and Watts et al., 2011).



Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework

A framework is being designed to support educators, schools leaders and family/community stakeholders in developing and implementing policies and practices that educate all students effectively and equitably, which includes providing and allocating appropriate supports and services to promote positive student outcomes.


A Culturally and Linguistically Responsive framework is intended to foster student-centered learning environments that affirm cultural and linguistic identities; seek positive academic outcomes; develop students’ abilities to think critically and make connections across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices; and cultivate agency in students to be social change-makers.

Guiding Principles	Welcoming and Affirming Environment /Classroom Culture
	High Expectations and Rigorous Instruction
	Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment
	Ongoing Professional Learning
	Management and Allocation of Resources, Supports and Services

VISION

- I. Students who experience academic success


- II. Students who are sociopolitically conscious and socioculturally responsive


- III. Students who have a critical lens through which they challenge inequitable systems of access, power, and privilege.



*** From the NYSED Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Framework**

Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices (C.L.S.P.) Continuum

Definition: Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices draw upon, infuse and evoke students' existing schema, experiences, funds of knowledge, and perspectives to optimally facilitate learning. C.L.S.P. also intentionally seek racial and cultural equity and pluralism in order to deliberately tailor district-wide norms, policies and practices to affirm the identities of and expand opportunities for historically marginalized students. C.L.S.P. heavily relies upon the scholarship and research of its preceding models, namely culturally relevant, culturally responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogies (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). – Dr. Colin Rose & Hayden Frederick-Clarke

Cultural Pre-Competence

COMPETENCY 1:

Awareness: Understanding One's Lens and Bias

Sufficient analysis of one's own culture to understand the lens that one brings to his/her role; familiarity with one's cultural and racial biases along with knowledge of where to find compensatory resources; ability to recognize and disrupt the effects of his/her personal bias(es).

ATTRIBUTES

- **Recognizes** and considers one's own surface, shallow and deep cultural influences and social location and how these impact his/her personal communication style, performance expectations, pedagogy, etc.
- **Acknowledges** and values culture as fundamental to relationships and learning.
- **Understands** that culture can be used to empower or enervate, especially in contacts with marginalized cultures.
- **Understands** the power dynamics between dominant and marginalized cultures and/or persons from different social locations as well as the historical and sociological contexts of these dynamics.
- **Is willing** and able to recognize and intentionally disrupts personal biases by reflecting on his or her cultural frame and/or social location, widening interpretations, and recognizing triggers.

COMPETENCY 2:

Cultural Learning/Relationship Building

Ability to build authentic relationships with students, families, and communities to create a learning partnership. Rigorous inquiry and investigation into students' backgrounds.

ATTRIBUTES

- **Proactively examines cultures** in order to build relationships with students, families, and communities through communication that refrains from making assumptions about class, race, ethnicity, ability, age, home life, language etc.
- **Builds strong, working relationships with students and families** employing a two-way communication style that proactively engages them beyond problem issues or concerns and acknowledges differing degrees of comfort with traditional schooling from different families/subgroups.
- **Uses rapport and alliance building techniques** to create the trust needed for deep learning in the classroom.

Cultural Proficiency (CP)

COMPETENCY 3:

Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices

Utilizes the cultural knowledge of students, families, and communities to adapt practices, materials and environments to engage, motivate, and facilitate deep learning. Is culturally and linguistically sustaining, both validating and connecting to cultural schema to maximize learning opportunities through rigorous instruction and the use of data to reflect and adjust practices.

ATTRIBUTES

- **Empowers students** by setting high academic goals and expectations for all students. Refrains from deficit-based thinking and provides students with appropriate academic and social/emotional supports and encouragement.
- **Provides learning opportunities and experiences** that prepare students to persevere and become independent and critical learners.
- **Prepares students for standardized assessments** but more importantly gives opportunities to learn through authentic assessments.
- **Uses quantitative and qualitative data** to inform practices and necessary adjustments.
- **Challenges traditional curricula** that excludes the contributions and perspectives of traditionally underrepresented racial and ethnic groups; allows students to "see" themselves reflected in the curricula in positive and substantial ways.

Observed Behaviors Along the Continuum

Cultural Pre-Competence

COMPETENCY 1: OBSERVABLE BEHAVIORS: Individuals:

- Evidence of **reflective behavior** (e.g. journaling, regular meetings)
- Evidence of **positive offsets** for cultural safety, informed by self reflection (e.g. positive proximity and visibility techniques, trigger control, etc.)
- Evidence of **closing disparities** such as those regularly found in disciplinary/punitive tools
- Evidence of **reading texts**, especially those assigned, relevant to Race, class, gender and culturally proficient instruction

Open to feedback

Educator Rubric Elements:

IV- A-1: Reflective Practices

IV- B-1: Professional Learning and Growth

LEADERS/ORGANIZATION:

- Scheduling and/or administration of O.O.A.G. professional development sessions
- Intentional scheduled time for reflective exercises for staff
- Evidence of collective assessment of organizational structure, policies and school-wide practices for bias(es)
- Routine implementation of the "7 Forms of Bias Protocol" to vet instructional materials
- Evidence of text-based discussions with staff

[AVID CP examples](#)

[Individual Classroom Tool](#)

[7 forms of Bias Tool Kit](#)

COMPETENCY 2: OBSERVABLE BEHAVIORS: Individuals:

- Evidence of **proactive and positive contact** with students and parents with regular and timely communication
- Evidence of **soliciting feedback/suggestions** from students, parents, and community when possible
- Evidence of **rapport and alliance building techniques** (e.g. knowledge of student's interests, affirming language), especially for triggering students/that trigger the instructor
- **Instruction that is void of destructive actions** such as microaggressions
- **Provides timely asset-based feedback** that holds high standards and specific actionable steps that conveys assurance of capability
- Evidence that **students are involved** in setting learning goals

Educator Rubric Elements:

I-C-3: Sharing Conclusions

II-B-1: Safe learning environment

II-B-2: Collaborative environment

II-B-3: Student motivation

III-B- Family Collaboration

III-C-1: Two-way communication

III-C-2: Culturally Proficient Communication

LEADERS/ORGANIZATION:

- Parents and community members on decision making bodies
- Structures for feedback from students, families, and communities
- Events and structures at school and in communal locations to increase the engagement of all families with flexibility for those who cannot meet at traditional times

Cultural Proficiency (CP)

COMPETENCY 3: OBSERVABLE BEHAVIORS: Individuals:

- Evidence that **social/emotional needs** of students are responded to appropriately
- Curriculum and instruction is **culturally relevant** and rigorous for all
- Teacher **provides appropriate scaffolds** for students to progress and become independent learners on grade level tasks
- Employs **cooperative grouping and co-construction** of knowledge, representing different modalities
- Explicitly teaches **norms** of school

Open to feedback

Educator Rubric Elements:

I-B-2: Adjustment of Practice

II-A-1: Quality of Effort and Work

II-A-2: Student Engagement

II-A-3: Meeting Diverse Needs

LEADERS/ORGANIZATION:

- Welcoming school/classroom environments that celebrate diversity and accomplishments of students
- On-going professional learning that develops staff's instructional and relational abilities and allows for collaboration and reflection
- Provides opportunities for students, parents/ community to learn/construct curriculum
- School-wide disaggregation of data including educational and social measures (e.g. discipline measures) to monitor for gaps
- Systemize CLSP (e.g. Monitoring for CLSP for all staff and structures for the work to be ongoing)

Strategic Plan: Pathway and Timeline (Tentative)



Year 1 CLSP Continuum: COMPETENCY 1:

“Year of Equity” District Level Awareness:
Understanding One’s Lens and Bias and Application
to Instruction and Curriculum

- ALL STAFF Professional Development
 - Admin
 - Summer Leadership Institute Administration
 - End of the Year Administrator Days
 - Utilize LTA for New Teacher Coursework

Year 2: CLSP Continuum: COMPETENCY 2:

Cultural Learning/Relationship Building

Year 3 CLSP Continuum: COMPETENCY 3:

Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices

CLSP Planning

Adopt a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Framework						
		Responsible Departments/Persons	Collaborative Departments	2020-21	2021-22	2022.23
Key Action Steps	Establish a district-wide team representative of different positions and diverse staff to advise on the adoption of a CLSP framework.	Equity Office	CLSP District Leadership Team	X		
	Conduct feedback sessions with multiple stakeholder groups in order to finalize a framework for adoption.	Equity Office	CLSP District Leadership Team	X		
	Adopt the framework to be implemented over the next 3 years.	Equity Office	CLSP District Leadership Team	X		

CLSP Planning

Create a culturally and linguistically responsive culture across the district

		Responsible Departments/Persons	Collaborative Departments	2020-21	2021-22	2022.23
Key Action Steps	Post and hire a Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices (CLSP) Coordinator pending budget approval. This position will support the training, monitoring and implementation of the CLSP framework within schools. This position will also collaborate with instructional coaches and curriculum coordinators to review curriculum for cultural responsiveness and anti-bias as well as align instructional practices with CLSP goals for instructional training, monitoring and support.	Equity Office	HR Office		X	X
	Establish an Equity Advisory for the district comprised of diverse staff, families and community partners to advise on the implementation of the district's CLSP framework and progress of goals.	Equity Office	CLSP District Leadership Team		X	X
	Create two subcommittees of the Equity Advisory, comprised of community and industry experts, to advise on the development and implementation of the district's plan to address Hispanic student success and English learner success.	Equity Office	Bilingual Office		X	X
	Elevate student voice by expanding the Lowell Student Advisory Council to include diverse student representation to advise on matters of racial and social justice across the district.	Schools Office	Equity Office	X	X	X

CLSP Planning

Create a culturally and linguistically responsive culture across the district (cont.)

		Responsible Departments/Persons	Collaborative Departments	2020-21	2021-22	2022.23
Key Action Steps	Develop a staff training program -Understanding One's Lens and Bias and Application to Instruction and Curriculum - to provide a foundational understanding of cultural and linguistic responsiveness (pre-competence) for every educator and administrator at Lowell Public Schools.	Equity Office	Curriculum Office and District Advisory		X	
	Identify a current staff member in each school to be the Equity and CLSP champion and lead the development of a school based CLSP team; this designee will attend the District's Disproportionality Workgroup Sessions and other professional learning opportunities that enhance their ability to be responsible for supporting their school's CLSP and equity goals.	Equity Office	Schools Office		X	
	Establish a school-based CLSP team in each school to support the school's goals around an identified area of disproportionality.	Equity Office	Schools Office			X
	Create district-wide affinity groups to provide a space for members with shared identities to network, have mentorship opportunities as well as other opportunities for professional and personal development. Affinity groups also provide spaces for coming up with solutions and recommendations for creating welcoming and inclusive work environments.	HR Office	Equity Office	X	X	X
	Develop and implement a Racism and Bias Based Incidents Reporting Protocol as one method toward combating racism and discrimination in the district; use the data to examine trends that reflect embedded institutional racism and individual racism that needs to be addressed.	HR Office	Equity Office	X	X	X

CLSP Planning

Foster a commitment toward high expectations and rigorous instruction

		Responsible Departments/Persons	Collaborative Departments	2020-21	2021-22	2022.23
Key Action Steps	Audit current curriculum resources for bias, cultural representation, and quality.	Curriculum Office	Equity Office		X	
	Adopt new curriculum where necessary which reflects the diversity of the students and families being served.	Curriculum Office	Equity Office		X	
	Train, support, monitor and evaluate instruction that incorporates cultural and linguistic practices into the classroom; provide training on how to infuse culturally and linguistically relevant teaching resources and materials into lessons (i.e. diverse literature, articles, and perspectives are incorporated into lessons).	Curriculum Office	Equity Office		X	X
	Embed CLRI best practices into the District's Instructional Coaching Tool and Model.	Schools Office	Curriculum Office; Equity Office			
	Incorporate CLRI school-based instructional walkthroughs which will be conducted to look for CLRI best practices.	Schools Office	Curriculum Office; Equity Office		X	X
	Provide professional development related to culturally responsive implementation of the District Code of Conduct and culturally responsive approaches to student discipline.	Curriculum Office	Schools Office: High School Team; Equity Office		X	X

CLSP Planning

Provide meaningful opportunities for family empowerment and partnership

		Responsible Departments/Persons	Collaborative Departments	2020-21	2021-22	2022.23
Key Action Steps	Establish a Family Advisory for the district comprised of representatives from various Parent Advisory Councils across the district, including school site council parent representatives to review the planning and implementation of the district's CLSP framework, including the parent engagement plan. This Advisory will not replace PACs or other Family Engagement Groups, but instead will provide a streamline approach to ensuring historically marginalized and diverse communities have a voice in planning, training, implementation and assessment of family engagement strategies and high impact family engagement activities.	Equity Office	Bilingual Office; Special Education Office; McKinney Vento Office; Bilingual Family Liaison Team		X	X
	Strengthen school site councils as stakeholders with the skills and knowledge to address disproportionalities within their schools and support the development of training programs for staff around culturally and linguistically responsive education.	Equity Office	Schools Office		X	X
	Develop a Parent Leadership Institute (parent academy) to provide training and support to families that will empower them as educational decision-makers for their children and partners with educators in supporting the academic success of students. The workshops, trainings and other family supports will be developed with the advisement of the Equity Advisory Council and Family Advisory Council.	Equity Office	Bilingual Liaison Team; Bilingual Office		X	X
	Establish Family Language Councils to support family advocacy and community-building among members of targeted linguistic communities.	Equity Office	Bilingual Office; Bilingual Family Liaison Team		X	X

CLSP Planning

Equitably Allocate Resources and Services for Student Success

		Responsible Departments/Persons	Collaborative Departments	2020-21	2021-22	2022.23
Key Action Steps	Implement a Diverse Teacher Leader Fellowship Program to bring together diverse teacher leaders to build their skills as part of the district's retention strategy. The fellows will gain common knowledge and language around culturally sustaining practices and hone their mentoring and leadership skills. The hope is for them to establish a professional learning community as well as gain skills for coaching incoming new teachers of color.	Equity Office	HR Office	X	X	X
	Create Hiring Dashboards which provide schools and central office hiring teams with a snapshot of each schools' student demographics compared with its staffing demographics. This dashboard will serve as a visual planning tool for schools in their outreach and recruitment of diverse staff to balance their school teams.	Equity Office	Data Office; HR Office	X	X	X
	Implement the Fair Student Funding Model to ensure that the district's budget truly follows the needs of each school's student body. This means not only directing more money directly to school sites – thus reducing central office funding – but ensuring that schools with higher need populations receive greater resources in a systematic way based on the differentiated needs of the students they are serving.	Finance Office	Schools Office	X	X	X
	Develop and implement a plan of action for eradicating disproportionate student outcomes (academic, attendance, college enrollment, and discipline) for Hispanic students.	Equity Office	Schools Office		X	X
	Develop and implement a plan of action for eradicating disproportionate student outcomes (academic, college enrollment) for English learners.	Equity Office	Bilingual Office		X	X

Next Steps

1. Continue working with the district's CLSP Leadership team to conduct stakeholder listening sessions leading to a CLSP framework for district adoption.
2. Establish an Equity Advisory Council to advise on the development of the activities, training, monitoring and evaluation of the CLSP plan.